DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 073 346 AC 014 209

AUTHOR	Lionberger, Herbert F.; Yeh, Chii-jeng
TITLE	Comparative Structuring Influence of Neighborhoods, Social Clique and Church Groups on Interpersonal Communication of Farm Information in Two Missouri Communities, 1956-1966.
INSTITUTION	Missouri Univ., Columbia. Dept. of Rural Sociology.
PUB DATE	Aug 72
NOTE	29p.; Paper presented at the Rural Sociological Society meetings, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, August 1972; from the Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station Journal Series
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Churches; *Farmers; *Information Seeking; Interviews; Neighborhood; Social Relations; *Social Structure; *Surveys; Tables (Data); Technical Reports; *Verbal Communication

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted concerning: (1) the manner in which neighborhoods, social cliques and church groups structure interpersonal communication of information about farming in two agricultural Missouri communities--Prairie, economically stable, and Ozark, undergoing rapid change; and (2) how this changed between 1956 and 1966. Interviews were conducted with 238 and 227 farmers (1956 and 1966 respectively) in Ozark and 218 and 174 (1956 and 1966 respectively) in Prairie. Each was asked to whom he talked most frequently about farming, from whom he obtained general farm information, where he obtained first and additional information about new farm practices he had adopted, the sources that were most influential in his adoption decisions, with whom he exchanged work, and the persons with whom he associated most closely or regarded as his best friends. The unit of analysis was the dyadic relationship of one farmer naming another rather than farmers as individuals. Results included the following: (1) there was a continued inclination for the proportion of opportunities to obtain farm information from fellow group members to persist at a much higher level than in the cross-group situations; (2) social cliques took the lead as a retaining influence in the low-importance relationships, dispossessing neighborhoods from this position; and (3) neighborhoods showed a marked tenacity of the retaining power. (KM)

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March 28, 1972

COMPARATIVE STRUCTURING INFLUENCE OF NEIGHBORHOODS, SOCIAL CLIQUE AND CHURCH GROUPS ON INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION OF FARM INFORMATION IN TWO MISSOURI COMMUNITIES, 1956-1966[1]

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By Herbert F. Lionberger and Chii-jeng Yeh[2]

Rationale

This study is concerned with (1) the manner in which neighborhoods, social cliques and church groups structure interpersonal communication of information about farming in a relatively stable agricultural community, and one in rapid process of change and (2) how this changed over a ten-year period, 1956-1966. Theoretical issues are implicit in the way importance of the information sought interacts with group influences encountered in obtaining the information. Utilitarian issues derive from (1) the continued inclination of people to obtain information from peers in their practice adoption decisions and (2) the importance of social groups as conditioning influences in how communication of the information occurs. Even though social groups admittedly influence the communicative behavior in a variety of ways, the concern here is only with the manner in which groups structure interpersonal communication of information.

Neighborhoods, social cliques and church groups being most prevalent in rural society, have a high potential for structuring interpersonal communication of farm information among farmers. Neighborhoods, which are gemeinschafts of all people living in a locality, most capture and capitalize on what there is about locality that is instrumental to farming as a family enterprise. Traditionally localized work-play activities, work exchange, mutual assistance and talk about

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[1]Paper prepared for the Rural Sociological Society meetings at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, August, 1972. This paper is a contribution from the Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station Journal Series_____.

[2]Department of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

farming have combined to give special meaning to places that farmers call neighborhoods.

In contrast, social cliques are gemeinschafts of people with similar interests. Whereas neighborhoods are ideally the product of a society which institutionalizes particularistic or ascriptive values, or both, social cliques tend to be adaptive structures in a society which institutionalizes universalistic and/or achievement values. Being selective of those with common interests and perhaps also with attitudes of superiority and exclusiveness, cliques may be especially expected to impose barriers to communication with outsiders. Also, by virtue of the social conditions out of which they emerge, they may be in the process of becoming informal groups next in social significance beyond the family (Loomis and Beegle, 1950, 134-171).

Traditionally, churches in rural society are places where farmers meet and talk. (a) The brotherhood principle which specifies equal access of one person to another, (b) a near universally observed day of rest which provides additional time to talk, (c) occasions for like minded persons to assemble and (d) a high membership, all combine to make the churches places where much farm talk and exchange of information is possible. Also, quite in contrast to people who are in active competition with each other, as restaurant owners who may not share business secrets (Welch, 1961, 94-96), farmers freely communicate what they know about farming to each other. With even the best agricultural research agencies unable to supply much needed local adaptability, social acceptability, application, and latent consequence information about innovations in farming, there probably is much of importance for farmers to talk about; and having done so,

there is a lingering tradition to label the information obtained from other farmers as most influential in arriving at own adoption decisions (Lionberger, 1963, and Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, 161-164).

Methodological Issues and Conditions

Conditions of Information Exchange

Assuming a continuing need which inclines farmers to seek and use the information that they obtain from each other, we would expect that the social groups to which they belong to facilitate farm talk among members and possibly to restrict communication with outsiders. Restriction would be most likely between groups that are unfriendly to each other. Furthermore, barriers might be expected to increase as the number and kind of group boundaries that a farmer has to cross to gain access to another farmer increases.

In postulating a group influence continuum, we can think of facilitating contacts among fellow members on the one hand, and barriers to contacts with outsiders where group boundaries have to be crossed on the other, with a kind of "no influence" situation in between where information seekers and soughts are not members of the groups under consideration. On the restriction side, one can think of both inclusiveness and exclusiveness barriers. The first is essentially self-imposed by preference for and preoccupation with own group members. This can be a very real, even though a subtle kind of barrier to talking to or interacting with others. In addition to greater accessability of own group members, people generally feel more comfortable with those of their own kind (Rogers, and Bhowmik, 1970-71). On the other hand, exclusiveness barriers are encountered by the outsider who must cross the border of a group of which he is not a member. The authors assume that barriers of group exclusion (being excluded) are more restrictive than those of group inclusion

(preoccupation with own kind). Finally, most resistance of all might be expected when an information seeker is confronted with both the inclusiveness of his own group and the exclusiveness of the group in which the person sought is located.

Thus, we have assumed as in a previous study (Lionberger, 1954) that the continuum of facilitation through neutrality to most restriction for an information seeker to get information from a person sought are as follows:

A. Both the information seeker and the one sought are members of the same group

B. Neither the information seeker nor the one sought is a member

C. The seeker is a member, but the one sought is not

D. The one sought is a member, but the seeker is not, and

E. The seeker is a member of one group and the sought a member of another

Although the authors recognize multiple group membership as especially significant for the communication and receipt of and response to information, the proposal here is to look at the influence of one kind of group at a time -- in this case neighborhoods, social cliques and church groups.

Importance of the Information. Another significant variable of structuring influence is how important the information being sought is to the seeker. Other things being equal, people are willing to incur greater costs for highly than low valued "goods" whatever they may be. Thus, we would expect facilitative or inhibitive influences of groups to decrease as the importance of the information to the farmer increases

(van den Ban, 1964). Furthermore, if we should find a tendency for barriers to diminish over a ten-year period, we could regard this as evidence of an increasingly open society, or at least insofar as social groups restrict acquisition of farm information from other farmers.

In establishing and operationalizing such an "importance to self" continuum, it has been argued that getting general information or just talking about farm issues is of less importance than obtaining information about new farm practices which one eventually adopts. Also, that in regard to the first, actually getting information, even though general in nature, is more important than just farm talk. While in regard to the latter, information to which farmers attribute most influence in arriving at adoption decisions is surely more important than first or additional information about the innovation eventually accepted for use. Farmers were questioned with these four alternatives in mind. These arranged on an assumed least to most importance continuum as follows:

(1) Persons with whom each said he talked most frequently about matters related to farming.

(2) Persons from whom each farmer said he got general information about farming.

(3) Persons from whom he obtained first or additional information about specific new farm practices which he eventually adopted.

(4) Persons who were named as being of most influence in arriving at own adoption decisions.

Locus of the Study

Two trade centered Missouri communities served as the locus of the study; (1) Prairie in a relatively prosperous stable agricultural community

in which farming had remained the chief source of local support and in which major farm enterprises remained essentailly stable for several decades and (2) Ozark where resources for farming were much more limited and where those who were able to remain in farming had to make drastic changes in basic farm enterprises, while the vast majority had to shift partly or wholly to non-farm sources of economic support. This was mostly furnished by small industries located in the local community center. With interpersonal communication about farming as the central issue, all farmers (except for less than 5 percent refusal) were interviewed; 238 and 227 in Ozark, 1956 and 1966, respectively, and 218 and 174 in Prairie, in 1956 and 1966, respectively. Each farmer was asked to indicate whom he talked to most frequently about farming, from whom he obtained general farm information, where he obtained first and additional information about new farm practices he had adopted, the sources that were most influential in his adoption decisions, with whom he exchanged work and the persons with whom he associated most closely or regarded as his best friends.

Neighborhoods were delineated by the use of local residents who indicated who belonged and who didn't and cliques on the basis of aggregates of social associate choices starting first with reciprocated triadic relationships. Others were added as sociometric choices warranted. Doubtful cases were included or excluded on the basis of independent judgments of local residents about who associated closely with whom. Details with regard to the method used have been described by Bruton (1970).

The Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis was the dyadic relationship of one farmer

naming another rather than farmers as individuals. This is a type of analysis that was strongly recommended by Coleman in 1958 and is in increasing favor as a unit of analysis in communications research (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955, Blau 1962, Lionberger and Coughenour 1957, van den Ban 1964, Rogers and Bhowmik 1970-71 to name a few). Use of such a unit allowed the authors to focus attention on the elemental interpersonal communicative relationships and to determine the extent to which these were contained within or cut across group boundaries, and accordingly to assess facilitative or retarding influences on interpersonal acquisition of farm information.

Use of Opportunities for getting Information from Other Farmers

The authors chose proportion of opportunities used to contact other farmers in each of the group related situations A through E as the primary way of assessing structuring influence of the groups under consideration. It was a simple matter, to count the number of relationships actually established in each of the situations, but computing opportunities for contact required arbitrary decisions about whom and how many should be included in the "opportunity for contact" base. An earlier procedure of regarding everybody in the community (Lionberger and Coughenour 1957) as prospects was rejected for a more limited number confined to all farmers within a circle with self as center and the most distant person sought for the purpose, e.g., farm talk, as the radius. A computerized grid system was used for this purpose. This method and its rationale have been previously described by Lionberger and Copus (1972).

Tendency to Cross or Stay Within Own Group Boundaries

Another test of changing structural influence of groups was simply to examine the percent of the total contacts made that were contained within

own groups (Situation A), completely outside of all groups of the type under consideration (Situation B), and those which occurred across group lines (C through E combined). Thus, it could be determined whether inclinations to stay in or cross group boundaries was greater for neighborhoods, social cliques or church groups and how this changed over the ten-year period.

Expectations

Although the nature and extent of the structuring influence of neighborhoods, social cliques and church groups on the communication of farm information was regarded essentially as an open question, certain structuring effects were expected to occur; namely:

1. Facilitation of informational interaction with own members expected in all groups. At the same time these groups were expected to act as barriers to contacts with outsiders.
2. Restrictive consequences were expected to increase in proportion to the number of barriers that had to be crossed in group situations C through E.
3. Structuring influences whether facilitating or inhibiting were expected to decrease for all the social groups as the importance of the information to self increased.
4. Social cliques composed of persons with like interests and feelings of affinity and possible feelings of superiority were expected to impose greater restrictions on the communication of farm information, than either neighborhoods, which are composed of a gemeinschaft of people in a given locality with attendant mutual welfare feelings or churches, or churches which presumably ascribe to the principle of equal access to all.

5. The structuring influence of social cliques was expected to increase over the ten-year period and that of neighborhoods to decrease; also that whatever changes did occur, they would be greater in Ozark, in process of rapid social change, than in more stable Prairie.
6. Church groups were expected to facilitate communication among members but to offer little resistance to cross-group communication.

Analysis of Data

We start with what happened to the proportion of farmers who were members of the groups under consideration. Accordingly, from Table 1, we see that social clique and neighborhood membership remained essentially constant in Prairie, the economically stable community, where farming remained as the chief means of sustenance for the people living there. But in Ozark, where shifts to full and part time off-farm employment were necessary, there was a distinct decline in neighborhood affiliation. The percent who were social clique members, including those who were members of neighborhoods also, remained about constant, but membership in "cliques only" increased (Lionberger and Yeh, 1972). In both communities, church membership, highest of all in 1956, reamined so over the ten-year period.

Insert Table 1 about here.

Proportion of Opportunities used Along the Assumed Facilitation - Resistance Gradient

In Neighborhoods. First, in Ozark with two minor exceptions, there was a consistent decrease in proportion of opportunities used from own group Situation A to cross group Situation E. This conformed quite generally to the expected resistance gradient idea. The two small exceptions were in

the Situation D, general source relationship in 1956 and 1966 (See Tables 2 and 3). Thus a perfect gradient occurred in 6 of the 8 farm informational relationships for the two years and nearly so in the other two. This was the only group type for which this high degree of consistency in contact opportunity use occurred along the facilitation-resistance gradient.

In Prairie, the same pattern was evident in 1956, with exceptions in Situation D for specific source and with a number of substantial reversals in the "most influence" information seeking relationship. Again in 1966, a perfect gradient occurred for the most frequent farm talk and general farm information relationships and with one exception (Situation D) in the specific source one also. But again, in the most influence relationships, there was at least one substantial reversal. In fact, the inclination to cross neighborhood lines for the more important kinds of information was clearly evident. Also, one of the neighborhoods gave the appearance of being "an influential" among neighborhoods for both those living outside of all neighborhoods and those living in others. Surely, this was in part due to regularly scheduled adult farm classes held in this neighborhood which attracted farmers from a wide area. However, it is important to note that the tendency to neighborhood cross-over occurred only in the "most influence" informational relationships. "Smaller talk" continued to be structured by neighborhood boundaries. The inclination of non-neighborhood farmers to seek most influence information from farmers in neighborhoods (Situation D) in 1966 was apparently a continuation of the established pattern to seek farmers for "most influence" information on a quality basis quite aside from where they lived. This, we should note, was quite in contrast to Ozark, where the structuring influence of neighborhoods along the resistance continuum remained quite intact across the "importance of information to self" continuum

at both points in time. This difference was in accord with the generally more localized social associational inclinations of farmers in Ozark than in Prairie.

Insert Table 2 through Table 5 about here.

In Social Cliques. The structuring influence of social cliques was indeed different from that of neighborhoods, but not in the direction expected. Cliques, expected to act as restrictors of communication in the cross-group information seeker - sought situations (C through E) operated in a quite contrary manner. But first we might well note that the largest difference in opportunities for contacts used was between getting farm information from one's own clique members (Situation A) in contrast to all of the other situations (B through E) and that these differences decreased sharply and in general consistently as the importance of the informational relationship increased (See Tables 2-5). The decline in facilitation of communicative relationships in Situation A from the little to the much importance end of the information importance continuum was quite in accord with an inclination to confine "small talk," so to speak, to own informal social groups, but to seek others better qualified as information sources for the more important information. To be sure, there is nothing mysterious or amazing about his, but the question of whether social cliques operated to constrain access to quality consultants must be posed. We expected social cliques to impose constraints, particularly in getting farm information of little importance and that this would be reflected by a decreasing percent of opportunities for personal contacts used in situations C through E, where cliques could operate progressively as barriers. But this was not the case. In fact, frequent contrary findings occurred in both communities in both years.

For example, in Ozark 1956 we see that in Situation E, where seeker farmers were in one clique and sought farmers in another, opportunity use rates were higher than in any of the situations where cliques might be expected to operate as barriers to a lesser degree, or in fact, in Situation B, where such barriers were absent. This occurred for both the "most frequently talked to farmer" relationships and those named as general farm information sources (See Table 2). Although the expected gradient almost occurred for persons sought as specific sources, a reversal was again apparent in the percent of opportunities used for farmers in one clique to seek information from those in another for the most influence relationship.

In 1966, many reversals again occurred, but mostly for outsiders seeking clique members (Situation D) but with one marked inclination to cross from one clique to another (Situation E) to get general information (See Table 3). This represented a marked reversal in the gradient expectation. In the final analysis, structuring influences of social cliques was more in the direction of facilitation of information seeking from clique members than restriction of contacts with them. Yet, we would be hardly prepared to conclude that presence of clique boundaries facilitated communication. The possibility of a quality-selective explanation is explored later.

In Prairie, the situation was much the same. In neither year could a case be made for a decline in the percent of opportunities used in C through E "clique barriers" part of the gradient. In 1956, reversals occurred in either or both of the D and E situations in comparison to Situation C, where insiders sought outsiders (See Table 4). There was a general inclination for opportunities used to be higher for outsiders seeking clique members (D) and for farmers in one clique seeking those in another

(E) than in the reversed Situation C, in the two most important informational relationships (specific and most influence source). Use rates in both cases were actually higher than the use that non-clique members made of those of their own kind, where no clique boundaries were involved at all (Situation B).

In 1966, distinct reversals in the resistance gradient expectation were evident in all of the information seeking relationships from small to big talk, particularly in the D situations where outsiders sought clique members (See Table 5). Furthermore, the reversals were substantial and generally higher than the use rates where no clique boundaries were involved at all (Situation B).

In Church Groups. In these, the most prevalent of the three kinds of groups, the characteristic facilitation of contacts with own members was again apparent, with two exceptions, (most influence and specific source contacts in Ozark, 1966). But this tendency to facilitation was less for church groups than either neighborhoods or social cliques -- despite the recurrent opportunity to talk on Sunday, a day of rest when time off from work would permit it. Yet, there was some inclination for farmers in Prairie to show a preference for church members over non-members. This was indicated by a quite consistently higher proportion of opportunities that farmers who were not members used to contact those who were, and for members of one church to name farmers who were members of another church, on the one hand, in contrast to the proportion of church members who sought those who were not members, on the other. In 1966, there was a consistent tendency in all the farm informational relationships for farmers to use more opportunities in the D and E situations than in situations B or C. Thus, there was a continued and even stronger preference for church members as sources of farm information than in 1956.

In Ozark, in 1956, about all that can be said was that church groups facilitated farm information exchange among own members but not nearly so much as cliques nor did they appear to offer barriers to outsiders who wanted to communicate with insiders or to members of one church group communicating with those of another. In 1966, there was a slight tendency to church member (situations D and E) over non-member preference (Situation C) in the general and specific farm informational relationship, but not nearly to the extent as in Prairie where the preference was universal across the informational importance continuum.

Thus ends the part of the analysis most intended to show the extent to which each of these social groups either facilitated or restricted interpersonal relationships for acquiring farm information. We now turn to a kind of analysis that will allow us to see more clearly how containment and group cross-over occurred in each of the informational relationships for each kind of group in each of the two communities and how these changed over the ten-year period.

Distribution of Interpersonal Relationships Within, Outside of and Between Social Groups.

Here several questions are at issue; namely,

1. What are the comparative structuring influences of churches, neighborhoods, and cliques on the choice of persons as farm information sources, i.e., which structure most and least?
2. Is the influence mostly of one of group containment or talk across group lines?
3. Does this influence change over the ten-year period?
4. Are there marked community differences?
5. How does the structuring influence of the three types of groups vary across the informational importance continuum range?

Answers to these questions are pursued by observing tendencies to relative group (neighborhood, clique and church) containment of contacts actually made as opposed to cross-group communicative relationships. In terms of the A through E situations, the within group relations are represented by those classified in Situation A, those completely outside by Situation B, and those involving movement across group lines by situations C through E, considered as one group. The percentages of all of the informational relationships of a particular type, e.g., most frequently talked to persons, that fall in each of the three (within, without and across) categories are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Insert Tables 6 and 7 about here.

First in regard to Ozark, 1956, within group containment was distinctly higher in neighborhoods than for either church or clique groups. Furthermore, this declined sharply along the information importance continuum, i.e., from low to high importance. Over 43 percent of the most frequently talked to relationships were confined to neighborhood compared to only 22.7% of the most influence mentions. Clique and church groups contained information choices about equally along the continuum, with this again being greatest for the "most frequent talk" relationships, and least for the most influence. This was accompanied by a little greater inclination to church than clique group containment for specific and most influence sources.

At the same time, crossing church group lines was much more frequent than crossing neighborhood and clique lines. This was increasingly in evidence as the importance of the informational relationships increased. Inclinations to cross clique lines was next most common and crossing neighborhood lines least common of all. In all cases, the inclination was greatest

to cross for specific sources and more likely for most influence than for either general or most frequently talked to" purposes.

However, by 1966, social cliques were the chief containers of most frequent farm talk and general source relationships and church groups for most influence. Containment again decreased across the informational importance continuum (from low to high) for social cliques, showed essentially no pattern for neighborhood and church groups except for a distinctive clannishness among church members in the most influence informational relationships. Again, comparing neighborhoods, churches, and cliques groups for tendencies to cross group boundaries, this tendency was most common for churches up to the most important influence relationship, and was least common for neighborhoods. For the most influence relationship, crossing clique boundaries was by far the most common and crossing church groups boundaries the least.

Time-wise, neighborhoods declined in their retaining power. The influence of the information importance continuum for neighborhoods tended to break down over the ten-year period, but church inclusiveness for the most influence relationship remained and was higher than for any group. Crossing again occurred about equally from one end of the informational importance continuum to the other, perhaps with a little more clannishness in a most frequently talked to than the other informational relationships. There was a little inclination for neighborhood boundary crossing to increase with the importance of the informational relationships. The most distinctive clique influence was for a sharply accelerated tendency to cross clique lines as the importance of the information increased.

In Prairie, there was a shift from neighborhoods as a main container of farm talk to clique and church groups as the chief ones. At the

same time, the increasing tendency to cross clique lines as the importance of the information increased persisted over the ten-year period.

Finally, the strong inclination to church-containment must be viewed in the light of the very high percent of farmers who were church members. Thus, the percent of informational relationships that could be completely devoid of church group boundary implications were very small indeed. This was reflected in very small "both outside" figures for church as a group reported in Tables 6 and 7. Quite the opposite was true for neighborhoods, where many of the informational relationships occurred completely outside of and away from neighborhood boundaries.

Facilitation of contacts as indicated by the proportion of possible opportunities used to obtain farm information from other farmers, was distinctly highest for social cliques in both communities in both years and was slightly higher in Ozark than Prairie in the most frequent talk and general source relationships. But this tendency declined, with only one exception, as the importance of the information increased. The exception was for general source in Ozark, 1956 (See Table 2).

An assumed decline in the percentage of opportunities for contacts used along the postulated situation A through E resistence gradient occurred only for neighborhoods, in Ozark, in both years with only minor exceptions for farmers named as general sources. The same tendency occurred in Prairie in both years but with exceptions occurring for the specific and most influence sources. Thus, the retaining influence of neighborhood on choices persisted in Ozark, but gave way under the pressure of quality considerations at the high end of the importance continuum in Prairie. But it was for these only that digression occurred. There was no inclination for a decline in percent of opportunities used in any of the other groups from

situation A through E. Thus, neighborhoods were unique in their structuring quality in so far as the resistence gradient was concerned.

Social cliques, strongest of all in facilitating information contacts among own members, almost appeared to facilitate communication across clique boundaries also. This inclination tended to increase as the importance of the information to self increased. The most likely explanation seemed to be that clique members were better qualified as sources of farm information than farmers who were not. It was found that they indeed had higher incomes, higher prestige, had adopted more new farm practices, and were otherwise better qualified as sources of farm information than farmers who were not members of cliques (Lionberger and Copus, 1972). Thus, social cliques, which may be inclined to exclusiveness of others and inclusiveness of own kind, did not serve as barriers to cross-clique communication of farm information, particularly where quality of the information was at issue. Conversely, it was in the "small talk" relationships that within clique talk was most facilitated.

Except for most influence relationships in Ozark 1966, the proportion of contacts used among own church group members was no higher than for the resistence laden situations (C through E). Churches generally tended to facilitate contacts among members but to a very low degree, compared to social cliques. There was an inclination to a kind of clannishness among fellow members, particularly in Prairie 1966, in all of the informational relationships, even though not confined to own church group. This seemed to be a carry over from 1956. Although a little of this inclination was noted in Ozark 1966, the choice pattern was mostly as if church affiliation made no difference except possibly for outsiders seeking insiders.

Findings from the distribution of choices actually made, within,

outside of, and across group lines, indicated that there was a tendency for containment of most frequent talk about farm information within cliques to increase in both communities over the ten-year period, and for those within neighborhoods to decrease. This was also apparent in the results from the more detailed situational analysis. These declines were very distinct in both the most frequently talked to and general source relationships in both communities.

There was a tendency for a greater percentage of all informational contacts to occur in church groups in Prairie, over the ten-year period, and in the specific and most influence relationships to a point where church retention exceeded that of neighborhoods, which at the same time was at a level very much above the retention level of social cliques.[3] Also the retaining influence was maintained quite consistently throughout the importance continuum. This was in marked contrast to social cliques which had much the highest containment at the low end of the importance continuum.

In Ozark the highest containing influence for church groups switched from most frequent talk about farming in 1956 to most influence in 1966. Also there was some increase in the specific source relationship next in order of importance. Again this was in contrast to cliques which consistently showed much more confinement of informational relationship at the low than at the high end of the importance continuum.

At the same time, with one exception (most influence source in Ozark,

[3]This was in contrast to but not incompatible with highest percent of opportunities for informational contacts used in cliques rather than church groups as seen in Table 5. The explanation would seem to be in the high percent of church membership in contrast to social cliques, which was 86.3 and 46.8 percent respectively.

1966). talk cross-over from one church group to the other was higher than for any other kind of group in both years. In Ozark, this kind of cross-over had declined to the lowest level for any of the groups in the most influence relationships. This, with the very high percent of contacts made within own church group, in Ozark in 1966, suggested a strong tendency to the confinement of most influence relationships within one's own church group. But in Prairie, there was an initial and continuing inclination to establish these relationships in cross-church group situations, rather than within. The preference by church members for each other in this high importance information relationship was suggested. Since church members apparently had no greater technological competence qualification than non-members, a kind of clannishness of based of "churchness" was suggested.

Summary and Conclusions

In regard to structuring influences and trends

1. There was a continued inclination for the proportion of opportunities to obtain farm information from fellow group members to persist at a much higher level than in the cross-group situations.
2. Social cliques took the lead as a retaining influence in the low importance relationships, neighborhoods being dispossessed from this number one position. Church groups were close competitors.
3. Cliques which in 1956 offered little constraint to obtaining farm information from other farmers at the high end of the importance continuum, offered even less at the end of the ten-year period.
4. Neighborhoods showed a marked tenacity of the retaining power, perhaps grudgingly relinquished as the importance sought increased. Thus, for people living in neighborhoods breaking away from own group seemed hardest of all, if perhaps for no other reason than

the distance involved in contacting other farmers.

5. Only neighborhoods, of all groups considered, showed any tendency to source use decrease in accord with the postulated resistance gradient. Nevertheless, digressions from this pattern increasingly occurred at the high importance end of the information use continuum.
6. There was a strong and persistent tendency to cross church lines quite consistently and uniformly along the importance continuum. But farmers nevertheless showed an ill defined kind of preference for own kind in the church community.

Main community differences were reflected in

1. The increasing tendency of farmers in Ozark to cross clique lines to get quality information over the ten-year period,
2. For farmers in Prairie to defy neighborhood lines in obtaining high importance information than farmers in Ozark, and
3. A greater preference of church people for their own kind as information sources in Prairie than in Ozark.

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TABLE 1 PERCENT OF FARM OPERATORS WHO WERE MEMBERS OF DESIGNATED SOCIAL GROUPS IN OZARK AND PRAIRIE, 1956-66

Kinds of Social Group Membership	Ozark		Prairie	
	% 1956 (n=238)	% 1966 (n=227)	% 1956 (n=218)	% 1966 (n=174)
Neighborhoods	52.6	23.3	47.7	48.6
Social Cliques	35.7	32.1	48.8	46.8
Church Groups	88.7	78.0	70.7	86.3

TABLE 2

PERCENT OF FARM INFORMATION TALK-SEEKING RELATIONSHIPS USED OF THOSE POSSIBLE CLASSIFIED BY KIND AND THE CLIQUE, NEIGHBORHOOD, AND CHURCH GROUP MEMBERSHIP OF THE PERSON NAMING AND NAMED, OZARK, 1956

Group Membership Situation of Namer and Named	Importance Continuum of Informational Relationships: from low to high											
	Most Frequently Talked to			General Source			Specific Source			Most Influence		
	Clique (N=167)	Neighborhood (N=167)	Church (N=167)	Clique (N=536)	Neighborhood (N=536)	Church (N=536)	Clique (N=333)	Neighborhood (N=333)	Church (N=333)	Clique (N=154)	Neighborhood (N=154)	Church (N=154)
A. Both inside	27.7	10.1	12.3	37.6	16.0	14.0	11.3	5.2	4.9	10.5	3.8	4.4
B. Both outside	2.4	6.5	7.4	7.4	9.5	9.7	2.8	3.9	3.0	2.6	3.1	2.0
C. Namer in; named out	3.1	4.7	5.2	5.7	6.6	8.2	2.9	3.2	1.7	2.2	2.9	1.9
D. Namer out; named in	4.1	2.5	3.9	7.3	3.9	6.8	1.8	1.0	3.2	1.3	0.8	1.8
E. Namer in one; named in other	5.6	2.5	4.8	10.1	4.7	8.4	1.6	0.6	2.4	1.8	0.6	2.0

TABLE 3

PERCENT OF FARM INFORMATION TALK-SEEKING RELATIONSHIPS USED OF THOSE POSSIBLE CLASSIFIED BY KIND AND THE CLIQUE, NEIGHBORHOOD, AND CHURCH GROUP MEMBERSHIP OF THE PERSON NAMING AND NAMED, OZARK, 1966

Group Membership Situation of Namer and Named	Importance Continuum of Informational Relationships: from low to high											
	Most Frequently Talked to			General Source			Specific Source			Most Influence		
	Clique (N=195)	Neighborhood (N=195)	Church (N=195)	Clique (N=279)	Neighborhood (N=279)	Church (N=279)	Clique (N=63)	Neighborhood (N=63)	Church (N=63)	Clique (N=30)	Neighborhood (N=30)	Church (N=30)
A. Both inside	30.6	10.2	11.5	28.8	8.8	6.6	14.5	4.7	3.1	7.1	4.4	1.7
B. Both outside	3.6	5.7	5.6	2.9	5.3	5.9	1.7	2.6	3.6	1.2	2.3	1.7
C. Namer in; named out	1.9	2.4	4.1	2.3	2.8	2.7	1.2	2.4	1.7	0.9	1.1	1.4
D. Namer out; named in	4.5	2.0	4.1	5.1	2.9	4.7	3.8	1.5	2.6	4.6	1.0	2.2
E. Namer in one; named in another	2.6	1.6	3.9	6.8	2.4	3.8	2.5	0.7	1.8	1.3	0.0	1.0

TABLE 4

PERCENT OF FARM INFORMATION TALK-SEEKING RELATIONSHIPS USED OF THOSE POSSIBLE CLASSIFIED BY KIND AND THE CLIQUE, NEIGHBORHOOD, AND CHURCH GROUP MEMBERSHIP OF THE PERSON NAMING AND NAMED, PRAIRIE, 1956

Group Membership Situation of Namer and Named	Importance Continuum of Informational Relationships: from low to high											
	Most Frequently Talked to			General Source			Specific Source			Most Influence		
	Clique (N=212)	Neighborhood (N=212)	Church (N=212)	Clique (N=502)	Neighborhood (N=502)	Church (N=502)	Clique (N=560)	Neighborhood (N=560)	Church (N=560)	Clique (N=268)	Neighborhood (N=268)	Church (N=268)
A. Both inside	25.2	7.4	6.3	30.3	13.3	7.0	19.5	6.4	5.3	8.1	4.5	3.2
B. Both outside	3.3	3.6	3.1	5.2	4.8	4.8	2.3	2.6	2.8	1.2	1.3	2.3
C. Namer in; named out	1.0	1.9	2.5	2.1	2.0	3.5	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.0	0.8	0.5
D. Namer out; named in	1.8	1.8	3.4	3.5	1.9	4.6	3.0	3.6	3.0	2.5	3.1	2.6
E. Namer in one; named in another	2.6	1.6	2.6	2.6	1.7	4.0	2.8	1.6	2.6	2.5	1.4	1.8

TABLE 5

PERCENT OF THE INFORMATION TALK-SEEKING RELATIONSHIPS USED OF THOSE POSSIBLE CLASSIFIED BY KIND AND THE CLIQUE, NEIGHBORHOOD, AND CHURCH GROUP MEMBERSHIP OF THE PERSON NAMING AND NAMED, PRAIRIE, 1966

Group Membership Situation of Namer and Named	Importance Continuum of Informational Relationships: from low to high											
	Most Frequently Talked to			General Source			Specific Source			Most Influence		
	Clique (N=149)	Neighborhood (N=149)	Church (N=149)	Clique (N=272)	Neighborhood (N=272)	Church (N=272)	Clique (N=109)	Neighborhood (N=109)	Church (N=109)	Clique (N=58)	Neighborhood (N=58)	Church (N=58)
A. Both inside	23.9	8.0	5.1	23.2	8.9	5.6	14.4	5.6	3.4	13.0	5.5	2.7
B. Both outside	1.6	2.3	2.1	2.3	3.0	0.8	1.3	2.3	0.5	1.3	1.7	0.0
C. Namer in; named out 1	0.7	2.2	0.5	1.2	2.7	1.1	1.4	1.6	0.9	1.2	1.7	0.6
D. Namer out; named in	2.5	1.7	3.1	3.4	2.0	2.8	3.4	1.9	2.0	3.2	2.0	1.8
E. Namer in one; named in another	1.1	0.6	1.9	2.1	1.0	3.1	1.8	1.3	2.4	1.3	0.7	1.9

TABLE 6

PERCENT OF DESIGNATED FARM TALK INFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS USED WITH FELLOW FARMERS WITHIN, OUTSIDE, AND ACROSS CLIQUE, NEIGHBORHOOD, AND CHURCH GROUP BOUNDARIES IN OZARK, 1956 AND 1966

KIND OF INFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIP	Clique		Neighborhood		Church	
Group Boundary Situation of Information Seeker and sought	1956 %	1966 %	1956 %	1966 %	1956 %	1966 %
	(N=167)	(N=195)	(N=167)	(N=195)	(N=167)	(N=195)
MOST FREQUENTLY TALKED TO ABOUT FARMING	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both within same group	27.9	34.9	43.7	25.1	27.5	23.6
Both outside	34.5	36.4	34.1	56.9	7.8	14.4
Had to cross a group boundary	37.6	28.7	22.2	18.0	64.7	62.0
	(N=536)	(N=280)	(N=536)	(N=280)	(N=536)	(N=280)
GENERAL SOURCE	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both within same group	25.2	23.6	38.8	6.2	19.4	18.3
Both outside	38.4	30.0	37.1	51.0	7.1	13.3
Had to cross a group boundary	36.4	46.4	24.1	42.8	73.5	68.4
	(N=193)	(N=64)	(N=193)	(N=64)	(N=193)	(N=64)
SPECIFIC SOURCE	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both within same group	10.0	19.0	26.1	27.8	15.3	22.2
Both outside	42.3	28.6	39.6	41.7	5.7	11.1
Had to cross a group boundary	47.7	52.4	34.3	30.5	79.0	66.7
	(N=154)	(N=31)	(N=154)	(N=31)	(N=154)	(N=31)
MOST INFLUENCE SOURCE	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both within same group	11.7	13.3	22.7	16.7	16.2	70.0
Both outside	48.1	23.3	44.2	50.0	5.2	16.7
Had to cross a group boundary	40.2	63.4	33.1	33.3	78.6	13.3

TABLE 7

PERCENT OF DESIGNATED FARM TALK INFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS USED WITH FELLOW FARMERS WITHIN, OUTSIDE AND ACROSS CLIQUE, NEIGHBORHOOD, AND CHURCH GROUP BOUNDARIES IN PRAIRIE, 1956 AND 1966

KIND OF INFORMATION RELATIONSHIP	Clique		Neighborhood		Church	
Group Boundary Situation of Information Seeker and Sought	1956 %	1966 %	1956 %	1966 %	1956 %	1966 %
	(N=212)	(N=150)	(N=212)	(N=150)	(N=212)	(N=150)
MOST FREQUENTLY TALKED TO ABOUT FARMING	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both within same group	30.2	41.3	31.6	22.7	26.4	36.0
Both outside	37.8	16.0	42.5	48.0	5.2	2.7
Had to cross a group boundary	32.1	42.7	25.9	29.3	68.4	61.3
	(N=502)	(N=273)	(N=502)	(N=273)	(N=502)	(N=273)
GENERAL SOURCE	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both within same group	27.3	27.8	36.1	21.6	22.9	27.6
Both outside	3.16	18.3	45.2	49.1	5.8	1.1
Had to cross a group boundary	41.1	53.9	18.7	29.3	71.3	71.3
	(N=560)	(N=110)	(N=560)	(N=110)	(N=560)	(N=110)
SPECIFIC SOURCE	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both within same group	17.3	21.0	22.9	26.4	25.2	27.5
Both outside	23.0	12.7	32.5	40.9	3.4	0.9
Had to cross a group boundary	59.7	66.3	44.6	32.7	71.4	71.6
	(N=268)	(N=59)	(N=268)	(N=59)	(N=268)	(N=59)
MOST INFLUENCE SOURCE	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Both within same group	11.6	24.1	22.4	25.4	25.4	29.3
Both outside	18.7	13.8	25.7	39.0	4.1	0.0
Had to cross a group boundary	69.7	62.1	51.9	35.6	70.5	70.7

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